

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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SCCT-01 SIL-01 LAB-04 EB-07 COME-00 /072 W

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R 101738Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4565

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: DISTURBANCES IN CATALONIA

SUMMARY: BARCELONA HAS BEEN THE SCENE OF DISORDERLY DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE PAST TWO WEEKENDS PRINCIPALLY INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE, NOT WORKERS, DEMANDING AMNESTY AND LOCAL AUTONOMY. CIVIL GOVERNOR HAS TOLD AMCONGEN THAT HE WILL USE ALL MEANS AT HIS DISPOSAL TO PREVENT MAJOR DISTURBANCE FROM TAKING PLACE. END SUMMARY.

1. LEFT-WING ORGANIZERS IN BARCELONA TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO HOLD MAJOR DEMONSTRATIONS FEB 1 AND 8. ACCORDING TO AMCONGEN BARCELONA, LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS, AFTER FAILING TO OBTAIN PERMISSION FROM CIVIL GOVERNOR TO STAGE DEMONSTRATION, SUCCEEDED FEB 1 IN BRINGING OUT 10,000-12,000 YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE STREETS WHO WERE EFFECTIVELY PREVENTED FROM

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COALESCING INTO SINGLE GROUP BY POLICE FORCES, ISOLATED

GROUPS OF DEMONSTRATORS DEMANDED POLITICAL AMNESTY.

2. ON FEB 8 THE PCE-MANIPULATED ASSEMBLY OF CATALONIA, CONSISTING OF A NUMBER OF LEFTIST PARTIES AND GROUPS FAVORING LOCAL AUTONOMY, WAS ABLE TO BRING OUT 5,000-6,000 DEMONSTRATORS WHO AGAIN WERE PREVENTED BY POLICE FROM COMING TOGETHER TO FORM A SINGLE GROUP. THESE DEMONSTRATORS, WHICH INCLUDED WELL-KNOWN PRIEST, FATHER XIRINACHS, DEMANDED "FREEDOM, AMNESTY, AND AUTONOMY." A NUMBER OF ARRESTS WERE MADE, INCLUDING XIRINACHS, BUT ALL WERE SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED. ALTHOUGH THE FEB 8 DISTURBANCES INVOLVED FEWER PEOPLE, THERE WAS MORE VIOLENCE -- AUTOMOBILES WERE DAMAGED AND SOME 24 POLICEMEN WERE REPORTEDLY INJURED BY STONES.

3. NEW CIVIL GOVERNOR OF BARCELONA PROVINCE, SANCHEZ-TERAN, TOLD AMCONGEN FEB 9 THAT HE WOULD NOT ALLOW MAJOR DEMONSTRATION FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES TO TAKE PLACE. HE HAD REFUSED PERMISSION FOR DEMONSTRATIONS FEB 1 AND 8 AND DID NOT INTEND TO HAVE POLITICS BECOME A MATTER OF DISORDERLY CROWDS.

4. AMCONGEN REPORTS THAT MAJORITY OF DEMONSTRATORS IN PAST TWO WEEKS WERE YOUNG PEOPLE INCLUDING MANY STUDENTS; WORKERS WERE NOT INVOLVED. IN HIS VIEW, THE TENSION WHICH EXISTED IN BARCELONA AT THE HEIGHT OF THE RECENT WAVE OF STRIKES HAS SUBSIDED AND THE RECENT DISTURBANCES HAVE NOT ALTERED A GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF BUSINESS-AS-USUAL. STABLER

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